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ABSTRACT

This document reports results of an online survey that examined practices and procedures in the management of electronic resources in 65 academic library reference departments. Responses are related to: (1) student population; (2) library use by community people; (3) number of public access workstations, workstations with World Wide Web access, and printers; (4) charging for printing; (5) online subscriptions based on IP (Internet Protocol) address, password, or student identification; (6) password security; (7) proxy servers; (8) offering off-campus students access to library databases without a proxy server; (9) desktop security; (10) use of signup sheets, time limits, identification, filtering software, age limits, and passwords for Internet workstations; (11) use of library workstations by patrons for email, games, chat rooms, or word processing; (12) limitations on Internet use by community people; (13) access to the Internet by community people from other locations on campus; (14) problems with patrons viewing pornography; (15) positions in library responsible for responding to email reference questions; (16) positions responsible for assisting with library technical problems; (17) positions responsible for purchase decisions of online database subscriptions; (18) positions responsible for implementation of online databases; (19) positions responsible for web design and implementation; and (20) library autonomy concerning computing infrastructure. (MES)

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MANAGING ELECTRONIC RESOURCES: A Survey

Of Current Practices in Academic Libraries

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Librarians providing reference services today are aware that these services have been evolving for some time now. While we are still concerned with how to effectively and efficiently introduce students to the intricacies and vagaries of the research process, now we must also deal with technology as it relates to that process. Not only must we master and then teach any number of varying search engines, but at the same time, we must deal with various software programs and hardware that is not always cooperative. In addition to dealing with all of the above, someone, somewhere, is expected to keep reference services organized and functioning smoothly. Policies and procedures must be in place to manage all of the activities going on in the reference area. Do we want students to use library computers for word processing, or games, or chat rooms, or do we want library computers to be used solely for library functions? Can we afford to subsidize printing, even for full text databases and web pages, or do we need to recoup some of our expenses in some way? How do we manage the many functions and activities that make up the reference department today?

No single survey could address all of the issues that we currently face. Modeled along the lines of the Spec Kits published by the Association of Research Libraries, this survey focuses on learning what practices and procedures are being used in the overall management of electronic resources in academic reference departments, rather than on the provision of reference services per se. In providing a snapshot of current practices, so to speak, the intended outcome is to provide information that may be useful for libraries planning their own policies and procedures for dealing with electronic resources.

A print survey was devised, based on issues facing the reference department at Governors State University, with the assumption that similar issues were being dealt with at other academic libraries as well. A test survey was administered to library colleagues at Governors State University. Following this, the survey was administered to the Heads of Reference Services at three public universities in Illinois, during campus visits to those universities. At this point, it was determined that more information could be obtained by conducting the survey online than by personal visits to campuses. With the assistance of our Microcomputer Specialist, the survey was transferred to online format using DreamWeaver, and posted on the web at the following address: http://www.govst.edu/library/bethsurvey.htm

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Once the survey was online, email messages were sent to librarians at thirty-five libraries requesting that the survey be completed. Twenty-five of these libraries were identified through presentations at the "Computers in Libraries Conference" of Spring, 1999. Ten were identified as public universities that were either formerly Board of Governors Universities in Illinois, or were universities that were similar to Governors State University demographically. Of the thirty-five libraries contacted, only seven responses were received, which was a very poor return rate of 20%. It is very likely that the poor rate of return may have been due to the fact that the survey was sent during the summer months when individuals contacted may not have been on campus.

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In order to achieve a broader pool of results, the survey was posted on two library listservs, COLLIB and LIBREF. The responses from the listservs, together with the 7 previous responses, created a total response pool of 65 libraries. Although this is not a large pool, it more than sufficed for the type of snapshot that was needed.

Survey questions were intentionally open-ended, with most including a section for "additional comments" in order to encourage and elicit remarks. This was quite successful, with many comments and remarks forthcoming. This also meant that, in order to compile results, some degree of interpretation was necessary on the part of the compiler. Every effort was made to correctly interpret remarks. This online summary omits conclusions and recommendations that are specific to Governors State University, as well as appendices of detailed remarks made by respondents.

Managing Electronic Resources: A Survey of Current Practices in Academic Libraries

Summary of Results

1. **What is your student population?**

   Under 5,000 students: 36

   5 – 10,000 students: 10

   10 – 20,000 students 9

   Over 20,000 students 10

   Total # of responses: 65

2. **What percentage of your library use do you estimate is by people from the community?**

Student Pop.	0 – 5%	5 – 10%	10 – 20%	20 – 30%	Over 30%
Under 5,000	26	6	4	0	0
5 – 10,000	5	4	1	0	0
10 – 20,000	3	2	3	1	0
Over 20,000	3	2	4	0	1
Total	**37**	**14**	**12**	**1**	**1**
Percent	**57%**	21.5%	18.5%	1.5%	1.5%

3-4. How many public access workstations are there in your library's main reference area? Of these, how many allow patrons to access the WWW?

How many public printers do you have in your library's main reference area?

Student Pop.	Workstations	Web Access	Printers
Under 5,000	497	406	124
5 – 10,000	295	225	42
10 – 20,000	265	202	32
Over 20,000	598	546	53
Average #'s			
Under 5,000	13.8	11.3	3.4
5 – 10,000	29.5	22.5	4.2
10 – 20,000	29.4	22.4	3.5
Over 20,000	59.8	54.6	5.3

5. **If you charge for printing, how much do you charge?**

   What charging system do you use?

Student Pop.	Charge for Printing	Do Not Charge for Printing
Under 5,000	10	25
5 – 10,000	4	6
10 – 20,000	5	4
Over 20,000	6	4
TOTALS	**25**	**40**
Percent	38.5%	61.5%

Note:

25 libraries out of 65 (38.5%) charge for printing.

Six libraries state they will be charging for printing soon. Three schools that do not charge stated this in the following ways, which may imply they are considering charging: "not at this writing," "not currently," and "do not charge at this time."

Charges vary from: $.04 (1), $.05 (2), $.06 (1), $.07 (4), $.08 (2), $.10 (13), to $.15 (2). This averages to $.09 (which no one charges)

Systems used:

Copy cards and variations (4)

Danyl vendacard (1)

Debit card (1)

Diebold (1)

Donations (1)

Harco (1)

Honor system (3)

Ikon (1)

ITC (1)

Pharos Uniprint (1)

Unicard (1)

Uniprint ((5)

Vendacard

Names for different cards may be misleading. Is a debit card the same as a copy card? Is the Danyl vendacard the same as Vendacard? Is Pharos Uniprint the same as Uniprint?

Variations:

Free first page (1)

Free dot matrix (2)

Free inkjets for catalog (1)

Free catalog citations (1)

Free citations (including journal citations?) (1)

Download to floppy – no printing (2)

Charge only for full text IAC (1)

6. **Are your online subscriptions based on IP address, password, student id?**

Student Pop.	IP Address	Password	Student ID
Under 5,000	35	16	5
5 – 10,000	10	3	1
10 – 20,000	8	2	4
Over 20,000	10	0	1
TOTAL	**63**	**21**	**11**
Percent	97%	32%	17%

Note: Many libraries use more than one of the above options.

7. If you use password access, how do you ensure that only valid users have the password?

Student Pop.	Staff Only	Verify ID	Hand-outs	In-class	SS/PIN #	In-Library Only	Sign Form
Under 5,000	2	7	3	--	2	3	1
5 – 10,000	--	2	--	1	--	--	1
10 – 20,000	--	--	--	--	--	1	--
Over 20,000	--	1	--	--	--	--	--
Total	**2**	**10**	**3**	**1**	**2**	**4**	**2**

Note: Three libraries mentioned using specific software. One is using validation software called Webcheck by Carl, Inc.; one is investigating Web Access Management of INNOPAC; and the third library uses an Oracle database that stores a username and password for each user and verifies logins against account information.

Other: One library sets up individual accounts for graduate students and classes, or the librarians log the user on themselves.

One library uses passwords for off-campus users with the assumption that their MIS office uses an authentication process.

One very formal process: "The student contacts his/her liaison librarian who completes a Password Request Form. The Electronic Resources Library Assistant checks to see that the person is in the current patron database. If so, the person is issued a User I.D. and Password. The patrons are checked at least twice per year for registration status. Passwords for those not registered are purged from the system. Obviously we cannot absolutely ensure that the person issued the password does not share it with others. We are moving shortly to a proxy server based upon student ID and PIN."

And, there's the rub. Even with a very formal process, no one can ensure that passwords, once known, are not shared with unauthorized users. Please see attached detailed pages for additional comments.

8. Does your library have a Proxy Server?

Student Pop.	Proxy Server	No Proxy Server
Under 5,000	25	10
5 – 10,000	4	6
10 – 20,000	5	4
Over 20,000	7	3
TOTAL	**41**	**24**
Percent	63%	37%

Who is responsible for maintaining the proxy server?

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Student Pop.	Library Staff	Computer Ctr.	Both	Other
Under 5,000	3	17	2	3
5 – 10,000	1	1	1	2
10 – 20,000	1	1	2	1
Over 20,000	4	3	-	-
TOTAL	**9**	**22**	**5**	**6**
Percent	13.8%	33.8%	7.7%	9.2%

Other:

Generally, "other" indicates the libraries are part of a consortium or university system which provides support for the proxy server.

9. If you do not have a proxy server, how do you offer off-campus students access to your library databases?

Student Pop.	Do Not Offer	Password/ID	Dial-in/IP
Under 5,000	3	7	2
5 – 10,000	1	4	2
10 – 20,000	1	3	2
20,000	2	-	2
Total	**7**	**14**	**8**

- Note: Some respondents may not have understood the question about the proxy server. Since this question states, "If you do not have a proxy server…" it should only be answered by those without a proxy server. However, the numbers do not match with the answers in the prior question.

10. Do you have any sort of desktop security in place?

Student Pop.	Have Security	No Security	Will Soon
Under 5,000	24	1	3
5 – 10,000	6	3	-
10 – 20,000	7	1	-
Over 20,000	5	-	-
TOTAL	**42**	**5**	**3**
Percent	65%	7.7%	4.6%

Type of desktop security used:

Stud. Pop.	Fortres	Win NT	Win 9	Win Lock	Win Select	I Kiosk	Intern. Expl.	Policy Editor	Don't Load	None	Don't Know
Under 5,000	9	5	3	1	1	1	1	1	5	4	--
5 – 10,000	2	1	2	--	1	--	--	--	--	4	--
10 – 20,000	1	1	--	--	2	--	--	--	2	1	1
Over 20,000	--	1	--	--	--	--	1	--	2	--	1
Total	**12**	**8**	**5**	**1**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**1**	**9**	**9**	**2**

11. **Do you utilize any of the following for your Internet workstations?**

Sign-up sheets, time limits, showing ids, filtering software, age limits, passwords.

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Student Pop.	Signup	Time	ID	Filter	Age	Password	Any Limits
Under 5,000	4	10	5	1	3	4	15
5 – 10,000	1	2	0	2	1	0	2
10 – 20,000	2	3	2	1	0	0	4
Over 20,000	1	2	1	0	0	0	3
TOTAL	**8**	**17**	**8**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**24**
Percent	12%	26%	12%	6%	6%	6%	37%

Totals: 24 out of 65 libraries report using some combination of the above. This means that 41 (63%) of the libraries responding impose none of these limits on their Internet workstations

12. **Do you allow patrons to use library workstations for any of the following?**

Personal email, games, chat rooms, word processing.

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Student Pop.	Email	Games	Chat	Word Proc.
Under 5,000	21 allow	8 allow	12 allow	8 allow
	15 do not	28 do not	24 do not	28 do not
5 – 10,000	6 allow	3 allow	3 allow	4 allow
	4 do not	3 do not	7 do not	5 do not
10 – 20,000	1 allows	1 allows	1 allows	1 allows
	7 do not	7 do not	6 do not	6 do not
Over 20,000	6 allow	3 allow	4 allow	1 allows
	4 do not	6 do not	6 do not	8 do not
TOTALS	**34 allow**	**15 allow**	**20 allow**	**14 allow**
	30 do not	**48 do not**	**43 do not**	**47 do not**
Percent	52% allow	23% allow	30.7% allow	21.5% allow
	46% do not	73.8% do not	66% do not	72% do not

Comments:

10 out of 65 (15%) responded that they allow all of the above.

25 (38%) do not allow any of the above.

26 (40%) allow some of the above.

4 (6%) do not monitor, police, enforce or control.

11 (17%) have computers labs within the library that allow all of the above.

13. **What limitations, if any, do you place on Internet use by community patrons?**

Student Population	No Limits	Some Limits	No Response
Under 5,000	14	18	
5 – 10,000	6	4	
10 – 20,000	8	1	
Over 20,000	3	4	
TOTALS	**31**	**27**	**7**
Percent	47.6%	41.5%	10.76%

Community Limitations:

Stud. Pop.	Age	ID	No Printing	Time	Student Only	Limit Stations	Research Only	Student Priority	No Off.. Matl.	None
Under 5,000	3	3	1	3	2	3	2	5	2	6
5 – 10,000	--	--	--	1	--	--	1	4		3
10 – 20,000	--	--	--	--	1	--	--	--	--	5
Over 20,000	--	--	--	--	1	--	2	--	--	3
Total	**3**	**3**	**1**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**5**	**9**	**2**	**17**

Note: Two libraries that specified "research only" stated that this was unenforceable. "Student Priority" may be so common that it was not specifically mentioned by many.

14. **Can people from the community access the Internet from anywhere else on campus?**

Student Population	Yes	No
Under 5,000	10	26
5 – 10,000	5	5
10 – 20,000	2	6
Over 20,000	4	6
TOTALS	**21**	**43**
Percent	32.3%	66%

15. **If you have had any problems with patrons viewing pornography, what did you do to address those problems?**

Student Pop.	Not a Problem	Do Not Monitor	Ask to Move	Ask to Refrain	Ask to Leave	Act on Complaint	Research Only
Under 5,000	13	2	1	5	2	1	2
5 – 10,000	4	--	1	--	2	1	1
10 – 20,000	4	--	--	--	1	1	--
Over 20,000	3	--	2	--	2	1	1
Totals	**24**	**2**	**4**	**5**	**7**	**4**	**4**

Note: For 24 out of 65 libraries (37%), pornography is not a significant problem. Other responses include: turning the monitors to face the reference area (2); clearly posting policy (1); blocking pornographic sites (1); and calling Security (1).

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16. **Please explain which position(s) in your library are responsible for responding to reference email questions.**

Note: Due to the variety of labels for various positions, these responses were compiled in the following manner:

Department Head = Head of Reference, Head of Public Services, Reference Coordinator, Head of Information Services, etc.

Reference Librarians = Reference Librarians; Information Services Librarian; Information Resources Librarian, "Librarians who work reference," etc.

Reference Staff = All of the above plus support staff

Librarians = Professional librarians with positions not designated

Electronic Services Coordinator = any or all variations of positions which have primary responsibility for electronic resources, i.e., Library Systems Coordinator, Electronic Resources Librarian, Electronic Services Librarian, Systems Librarian, Network Resources Librarian, Operations Librarian, Network Services Librarian, Electronics Librarian, Database Coordinator, Media Specialist, Automation Librarian, Systems Coordinator, Network Information Coordinator, Systems Development Librarian, etc.

On duty = the person on duty at time of receipt, or a subject specialist

Coord. Forwards = a coordinator forwards questions to appropriate individuals for response.

Stud. Pop.	Head of Dept.	Ref. Librns.	Ref. Staff	Librns.	Elect. Services Coord.	On duty	Director Asst. Dir	Coord. Forwds	Do not offer	New/no Policy
Under 5,000	8	21	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
5 – 10,000	1	7	--	--	1	--	--	--	1	--
10 – 20,000	1	5	--	2	1	--	--	--	--	1
Over 20,000	--	3	2	2	--	1	--	2	1	1
Totals	**10**	**36**	**4**	**6**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**4**	**4**	**5**
Percent	15.3%	55.3%	12.3%	9.2%	6%	4.6%	3%	6%	6%	7.7%

17. **Please explain which position(s) are responsible for assisting with library technical problems.**

Student Pop.	Elect. Services Coord.	University Computer Center	Comb.Elec Coord. & Comp.Ctr.	Library Systems Dept.	Librarian w/ tech. Support	Reference Librarians or staff	Anyone Who is able	Support Staff
Under 5,000	12	4	4	--	--	1	13	2
5 – 10,000	4	1	1	--	2	2	--	2
10 – 20,000	--	--	--	3	2	1		2
Over 20,000	--	--	--	7	2	1	--	2
Total	**14**	**5**	**5**	**10**	**6**	**5**	**13**	**8**
Percent	21.5%	7.7%	7.7%	15.4%	9%	7.7%	20%	12.3%

Note: Please see the note on question #16 regarding position descriptions. "Library Systems Department" means the department rather than one individual librarian. Many libraries commented that the an individual would tackle a problem initially, and, if was too complex, or if it involved hardware failure, it would be forwarded to the campus computer center staff.

18. **Please explain which position(s) are responsible for purchase decisions of online database subscriptions.**

Student Pop.	Library Director	Director on Recom.	Head of Reference	Committee Group Dec.	Collection Dev. Coord.	Electronic Services Librarian	Reference Dept.
Under 5,000	2	11	2	14	2	2	3
5 – 10,000	--	--	--	8	--	--	2
10 – 20,000	--	2	--	5	2	--	--
Over 20,000	--	3	--	7	--	--	--
Total	**2**	**16**	**2**	**34**	**4**	**2**	**5**
Percent	3%	24.6%	3%	52.3%	6%	3%	7.7%

Note: Again, position descriptions vary greatly. Please refer to the note under question #16 and to the detailed notes for specifics.

Committee/Group Decision = Committee of librarians with varying positions, from subject selectors, electronic resources, serials, reference, senior staff, or any combination short of specifically the reference department. Similarly, Director on recommendation = director makes the final decision based on the recommendation of committees such as the above, plus other combinations.

19. Please explain which position(s) are responsible for implementation of online databases.

Student Pop.	Group of Individ.	Elect. Services Coord.	Head of Reference	Librarian	Tech. Services	Library Systems Dept.	Computer Center	Director/Asst. Dir.
Under 5,000	5	15	4	3	1	2	4	3
5 – 10,000	--	6	1	2	2	--	1	--
10 – 20,000	1	3	--	2	1	--	--	--
Over 20,000	2	1	--	1	1	4	1	1
Total	**8**	**25**	**5**	**8**	**5**	**7**	**6**	**4**
Percent	12.3%	38.5%	7.7%	12.3%	7.7%	10.7%	9%	6%

Note: Once again, see the note under question #16 for information regarding position descriptions. . Group of Individuals = more than 2 people responsible, e.g., Electronic Resources Reference Librarian, Automation Librarian and Automation Assistant, or database processing group. In nine libraries, the librarian responsible is assisted by support staff, technical support, etc.

20. Please explain which position(s) are responsible for web design and implementation.

Student Pop.	Electronic Services/ Webmast.	Library Systems	Committee Group Effort	Reference or other Librarian	Librarians With Tech sup.	Those With Know-how	Univ. or Outside Webmast.	Director or Asst. Dir.
Under 5,000	15	--	4	8	3	1	3	3
5 – 10,000	7	--	2	1	--	1	2	--
10 – 20,000	6	--	4	1	--	--	--	--
Over 20,000	4	2	4	--	3	--	--	--
Total	**32**	**2**	**14**	**10**	**6**	**2**	**5**	**3**
Percent	49%	3%	21.5%	15%	9%	3%	7.7%	4.6%

Note: See notes on position descriptions, question # 16. Nineteen libraries which stated that responsibility belonged to webmaster or electronic systems coordinator also stated that these positions received input from others.

Other positions responsible: cataloger (1), serials (1), technical services (1), library manager (1). At one library (over 20,000), web implementation is done by support staff.

21. **Please explain how much autonomy the library has concerning computing infrastructure, e.g., networking, hardware purchases and software support.**

Student Population	Almost Complete Autonomy	Quite a lot of Autonomy	Work Closely/ Joint Dec. w/ University Computing	Some or Little Autonomy	No Autonomy
Under 5,000	2	6	13	11	3
5 – 10,000	1	1	3	4	--
10 – 20,000	1	--	2	3	1
Over 20,000	1	3	3	2	--
Total	**5**	**10**	**21**	**20**	**4**
Percent	7.7%	15.3%	32.3%	30.7%	6%

Note: Most of the 21 libraries that responded they work closely with a university computing center also stated that they work within the confines of the university technology infrastructure insofar as purchasing compatible hardware, supported software, etc.

Narrative summary of results

A hot topic right now is whether libraries can continue to support free printing of search results, particularly with the increasing number of full text databases available, as well as full text websites. Some may argue that subsidizing the printing of full text articles is no different than if we subsidized the photocopying of print articles. Generally, we do not allow students to photocopy without charging, so why would we offer full text articles without charging? How are libraries dealing with the high cost of paper and toner incurred by the printing of full text articles? Of the 65 libraries responding, 25 (38.5%) are currently charging patrons for printing. Forty (61.5%) do not charge for printing. Six libraries stated that they will be charging soon, and three libraries that do not currently charge stated this in such a way that the implication is they are considering charging. Their responses to the question of whether or not they charge for printing, were: "not at this writing," "not currently," and "do not charge at this time." If we extrapolate from these comments that an additional nine libraries **may** be added to the "charging for printing" total, this would bring that total up to 34 out of 65, or 52%. Assuming that, prior to the advent of full text online articles and the World Wide Web, libraries generally did not charge patrons for printing, the fact that many libraries are charging for printing may be one of the few clearly identifiable trends indicated by this survey.

Those libraries that charge for printing use a number of different charges and charging systems. The amount charged runs from $.04 to $.15, with the most popular charges being $.10 (13 libraries) or $.07 (4 libraries). Charging systems run the gamut from the honor system to various vendacard systems. Uniprint received the most nods, with 5 libraries using this system. Assuming the Pharos Uniprint is the same system would bring the number up to 6. Variations on charging include allowing free printing for online catalog citations or for dot matrix or inkjet printing. The listings under question number five provide more details on these responses.

How do libraries provide students access to their online database subscriptions? A clear majority of libraries (63, or 97%) utilize Internet Provider (IP) addresses for their online subscriptions. Twenty-one libraries (32%) use passwords, while 11 (17%) use student ID. Many libraries use combinations of IP, passwords and student ID, so these responses are difficult to quantify exactly. However, the fact that 97% use IP address impacts how libraries are able to offer services to off-campus students. Unless students are able to access the Internet through their campus IP from off campus, they will not be able to access library databases. Of those libraries using passwords, many note similar problems regarding password security. Although libraries use a variety of security precautions for passwords, no single library appears to have a perfect solution for this problem. Clearly, no matter how rigorous the process employed for verifying an ID before giving out a password, there is no guarantee that the password is not being shared with others. Please see the chart for question 7.

IP address and password security issues bring us to the issue of proxy servers. It was surprising to find that 63% of the libraries surveyed (41 out of 65) are using proxy servers. A proxy server appears, for now at any rate, to be the solution for the questions of off campus access and password security. However, proxy servers bring additional questions as well. The assumption, of course, is that the server can be accessed by anyone through the web. Once accessed, the proxy server will require a student ID or social security number to identify a patron as an authorized user of the library databases. Now, the question is who maintains the proxy server? Do most libraries have the capability within the library staff to be able to maintain their own server? Nine libraries (13.8%) indicate that the library has full responsibility for maintaining the proxy server. For 22 libraries (33.8%), the proxy server is maintained by the computer center. Five libraries (7.7%) share the responsibility between the library and the computer center and 6 libraries (9.2%) have arrangements with a consortium or a university system that provides support for their proxy server.

How do libraries that do not have a proxy server offer off-campus access to library databases for students or distance learners? Seven libraries (10.8%) do not offer distance access to their library services. Fourteen libraries (21.5%) utilize password or ID access, and eight (12%) offer access through dialing into an IP address. Since there are 29 responses to this question and only 24 libraries that do not have a proxy server, it is assumed that at least five libraries must use a combination of password/ID and dial-in/IP.

Do libraries feel the need to have security programs loaded on library workstations to deter patrons from using Windows functions other than those designated for library research? Forty-two libraries (65%) have some sort of desktop security in place on their computer workstations. Only 5 libraries (7.7%) indicate that they have no security in place at all. Three are planning to add some sort of security soon. Fortres is the most often used form of security for the desktop, with 12 libraries (18.5%) using it. This is followed by Windows NT security (8 libraries/12%), then WinU (5 libraries/7.7%) and WinSelect (4 libraries/6%). Rather than using software for security, 9 libraries (13.8%) do not load software onto their

public workstations that they do not want their users to access.

Do libraries find it necessary to restrict in some way patron use of library Internet workstations? Relatively few libraries impose limitations on use of their Internet workstations, insofar as having sign-up sheets, time limitations, requiring ID, filtering software, age limits, or passwords. Twenty-four out of 65 libraries (37%) report using various combinations of the above. However, this means that 41 libraries, or 63%, report that they impose none of these restrictions on their Internet workstations. The most commonly used limitation is a time limit, used by 17 (26%) of the libraries surveyed. Other limits include signup sheets (8/12%) and requiring ID (8/12%). Four libraries (6%) also have limitations by age, password, or filter (not a subject filter).

Do libraries find it necessary to restrict Internet use by community patrons? Although 27 (41.5%) of the responding libraries report imposing some limits on Internet use by community members, 31 (47.6%) report no limitations for community users. This may be due to the fact that library use by community members is relatively low in most of the libraries surveyed. Limitations run the gamut, as seen in question number 13. Variations on this theme include limiting by age, requiring ID, limiting workstations available, limiting by time, limiting to research only, and not allowing printing. The most common limitation is to give students priority over community users. This may be so common a limitation that many respondents may not have specifically mentioned it.

Do libraries allow patrons to use library workstations for email, games, chat rooms or word processing? The workstation function allowed most often was email, with 34 of the responding libraries (52%) stating that they allow users to access email. Only 15 (23%) allow users to play games; 20 (30.7%) allow chat rooms; and 14 (21.5%) allow word processing. Seen from the other perspective, 30 libraries (46%) do not allow email; 48 (73.8%) do not allow games; 43 (66%) do not allow chat rooms; and 47 (72%) do not allow word processing. Ten out of the 65 libraries (15%) responded that they allow all of the above. Twenty-five libraries (38%) do not allow any of the above, and four libraries (6%) do not monitor, police, enforce or control these functions. Eleven libraries (17%) have computer labs within the library where all of the above functions are allowed.

Are academic libraries having problems with patrons viewing pornography on the Internet? Of the 65 libraries responding, 24 (37%) have not had a significant problem with patrons viewing pornography. Library responses to patrons viewing pornography suggest a range of various responses, often dependent on the extent of the problem. Variations include: asking patrons to move to a more remote workstation, asking patrons to refrain from viewing pornography, and asking patrons to leave the library. Four libraries only take action when there has been a complaint. Four libraries inform the patron that workstations are for research only. Two libraries do not monitor. Detailed comments suggest that viewing pornography may be more common in libraries that have a higher percentage of community use.

Questions 16 – 20 are concerned with which positions within a library are responsible for specific functions. These responses were challenging to compile, in that there are so many differing labels for positions that appear to be similar in function. The note under questions 16, 17, and 18 provide additional information as to how responses were compiled.

As expected, the majority of libraries have someone within the reference department who is responsible for responding to email reference questions. Ten libraries (15.3%) have the department head respond to email, while 36 (55.3%) have reference librarians respond, and 4 (12.3%) have reference staff respond, which may imply that paraprofessionals are also expected to respond to email reference questions. In 4 libraries (6%), a coordinator forwards questions to others. Four libraries (6%) do not offer reference email service, and in 5 libraries (7%) the service is new and/or there is no specific policy in place. The chart for question 16 provides additional information as to the range of positions that may respond to reference email questions.

Insofar as assisting with technical problems, the lucky libraries that have a library systems department or an electronic services coordinator seem to handle technical problems quite well. In 13 libraries (20%), the person responding to technical problems is "anyone who is able." It is interesting to note that this 20% is within schools with under 5,000 students, which would have smaller library staffs. Of the larger schools responding, 10 (15.4%) of libraries in schools with 10,000 to over 20,000 students, have a library systems department within the library that can respond to technical problems. From comments on this question, the overall impression one is left with regarding technical problems is that many libraries are still trying to do it all, either without adequate technical support, or without support at the time of need.

Purchase decisions regarding online database subscriptions overwhelmingly are made by committee, or group decision (34/52.3%), or by the director (16/24.6%) with input and recommendations made by others, often a committee. Together, these account for 50 libraries, or nearly 77% of the libraries responding.

The question of which position is responsible for implementation of online databases brought responses that covered a range of positions. Twenty-five libraries (38.5%) have an electronic services coordinator (or some variation of that position), who is responsible for implementing these services. Other responses ranged from a group of individuals, to the library director, with variations in between. The chart for question 19 provides the range of responses.

The question regarding which position is responsible for web design and implementation would have been clearer if it had been a two-part question. Often a different person is involved with web design than actual implementation. However, 32 libraries (49%) have some variation of an electronic services librarian or webmaster responsible for web design and implementation. Nineteen of those libraries stated that these positions also receive input from others regarding web design and/or implementation. Fourteen libraries (21.5%) make this a group or committee effort. Ten libraries (15%) leave this responsibility up to the reference librarian or another librarian position. Six (9%) have librarians take responsibility, but provide technical support to assist. Five libraries (7.7%) leave this responsibility to an outside or university webmaster.

Regarding how much, or how little, autonomy the library has concerning computing infrastructure, it is interesting to note that there is a nice little bell curve in this response, although somewhat weighted towards less autonomy. Five libraries (7.7%) respond that they enjoy almost complete autonomy, while 4 (6%) respond that they have little or no autonomy. Ten libraries (15.3%) enjoy "quite a lot" of autonomy, while 20 libraries (30.7%) feel they have "some or little" autonomy. Twenty-one libraries (32.3%) are right in the middle, responding that they work closely with, and often make joint decisions with, the university computer center. Most of these 21 also state that they work within the confines of

the university technology infrastructure insofar as purchasing compatible hardware and university-supported software.

Conclusions

Originally, it was intended that this survey be administered verbally to a limited number of individuals. If the survey were to be repeated on a broader scale, the questions would need to be phrased as closed questions to make compilation of results more effective and efficient. An additional question that could have been asked is: who pays for the purchase and maintenance of the library's proxy server? It would be interesting to look at the responses once again, with an eye towards those libraries with higher percentages of community users, and to look at the responses of public institutions as compared to private institutions.

In addition to providing insights into current practices for librarians who may be struggling with policy or procedural issues, there are also certain conclusions that can be drawn from the survey results. First, indications are that proxy servers offer an effective way for libraries to ensure access to library databases for authorized users, and a proxy server certainly will enable libraries to offer their online subscription databases to off campus users and distance education students. This trend may assist librarians who are lobbying for a proxy server for their own libraries. Second, charging for printing of online search results appears to be necessary for many libraries to recoup rising costs of paper and toner. Knowledge of this trend may assist libraries that are currently having budgetary problems supporting unlimited printing by patrons. Although "fees" per se are often anathema to librarians, charging for printing can be seen along the same lines as providing photocopiers for patrons to use. The library may provide the printer, but is there any reason for the library to pay for articles that patrons choose to print out? Third, technical support, particularly in smaller libraries, is an important issue. Comments along the lines of, "we grab anyone who can help" with technical problems in the reference area are typical. Simply adding technical troubleshooting duties to reference librarians' desk duties clearly is not the most effective use of a librarian's time or expertise. Based on survey comments, the best practice of libraries in the area of technical problems is to hire additional library staff as technical support. Fourth, Internet users in academic libraries enjoy fairly free access to the World Wide Web, however, common restrictions include accessing games and chat rooms. Word processing is also a function that, not surprisingly, most libraries do not offer, since students generally have access to a lab on campus for computer functions that fall outside the purview of library research. This knowledge may serve to assist librarians who are struggling with policies for workstation use that are fair and reasonable for students but that also provide optimum use of library resources. Finally, comments indicate that libraries with their own computer labs located within the library see less non-research use of reference area computers because students know they have access to a nearby computer lab for these purposes. The fact that 11 libraries (17%) have computer labs within the library and allow students relatively unrestricted use of these computers may be a trend to watch for.

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If any reader would like to see more detailed comments, please send an email request to: